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TAGS: PREL PINR AS CH JA

SUBJECT: INR A/S FORT'S SEPTEMBER 25 MEETINGS WITH DG KAWAI

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Joseph R. Donovan. Reason: 1.4 (b)(d)

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¶11. (S) SUMMARY: MOFA leadership is convinced that the Japanese government's stove-piped system of intelligence sharing must be reformed, MOFA Director General for North American Affairs Kawai told visiting INR Assistant Secretary Fort September 25. Top-level political leadership would be needed to make this happen, he said, and he was confident Prime Minister Abe saw this as a priority. Kawai suggested holding meetings between INR and DOS regional bureau representatives and their Japanese counterparts to share analysis on regional issues, starting with a discussion of China. A/S Fort agreed that this was a good idea and said he would endeavor to arrange meetings of this type. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (S) The Japanese government "definitely" needs to improve its inter-agency intelligence-sharing, MOFA Director-General for North American Affairs Kawai told visiting INR Assistant Secretary Randall Fort in a meeting September 25. Top-level

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political leadership would be needed to change the current arrangement, in which intelligence is stove-piped between four different organizations in MOFA, JDA, the Cabinet Office, and the National Police Agency. Foreign Minister Aso was keen to solve this problem; fortunately, Kawai said, incoming Prime Minister Abe also seemed to share this priority.

¶13. (S) U.S.-Japan intelligence-sharing was evolving at a welcome pace, said A/S Fort; it was important to keep the progress going. A deep-rooted intelligence relationship could -- and should -- become part of the bedrock of the U.S.-Japan alliance, just as it was with our British and Australian allies, he said. Japan had the potential to become a major intelligence player, and a significant partner in this arena for the United States, particularly if it tapped the "underutilized assets" represented by the worldwide network of Japanese businesses and trading companies.

¶14. (S) Insights from open sources such as the business community, if aggregated and analyzed, had immense value. U.S. intelligence agencies, he noted, had staff specifically tasked with liaison with the U.S. business community. Japan, with its economic and diplomatic presence in countries like

Iran, could draw on insights that would be of great interest to the United States. Kawai replied that this was an intriguing idea, and encouraged A/S Fort to raise it with Japanese intelligence officials.

¶5. (S) Kawai proposed arranging regular meetings between the intelligence and regional bureaus of State and MOFA to "compare notes" on regional subjects, such as China and Central Asia (and the efforts of other countries to expand their influence there). A/S Fort agreed that this was a good idea and said he would endeavor to set up a first meeting involving INR, EAP and Japanese counterparts in which they could exchange views on China and where it was headed in the next five years.

¶6. (S) Trilateral intelligence-sharing between U.S., Japanese and Australian officials under the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD) umbrella had been very fruitful and should be expanded, said Kawai. Trilateral cooperation was not directed against China, he noted, but reflected common interests held by the U.S., Japan and Australia as leading regional democracies and free market economies. Increasing cooperation with India was also a focus of great interest for Abe and Aso, he said.

¶7. Assistant Secretary Fort cleared this message.  
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